

President's Priorities Are Global in Nature

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President Nixon tried to wrench the nation's attention away from Watergate and other domestic ills yesterday, to focus once more on the great issues of world peace.

His attempt to rekindle excitement over new ventures in high global policy repeatedly were sidetracked at his news conference by more mundane, more personal and more challenging questions. Only where foreign policy hit a domestic nerve, on the interaction of

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the Arab-Israeli conflict and looming oil scarcity, did his press conference reach the range of international subjects that most interest the President.

President Nixon nevertheless showed where he will center his own priorities for the nation: on moving forward with planned nuclear and conventional arms negotiations with the Soviet Union; on expanding ties with China, but simultaneously holding to a strategy of negotiating from strength.

The President served notice that he is prepared for more battles with Congress, if necessary, to prevent what he labelled the "fatal mistake" of slicing the defense budget to pay for domestic programs.

His tone was by no means as belligerent toward the Democratic-controlled Congress as it was a month ago, when he excoriated its decision to compel a cutoff in American-support bombing for Cambodia. He charged then, on Aug. 15, that Congress not only had confounded his strategy in Indochina, but that its action "undermines the prospect of world peace..."

But the President certainly was not nearly as conciliatory or open-handed toward Congress yesterday, as was his Secretary of State-designate, Henry A. Kissinger, two weeks ago, in extending an olive branch to Capitol Hill.

"The intention of the

President and my intention," Kissinger said in his first press conference on Aug. 23 as secretary-designate, "is to establish a new and full partnership with the Congress in developing policies which are in the national interest..."

Perhaps, if Mr. Nixon had been asked about that yesterday by one of the hundreds of newsmen vying to put questions, he might have revalidated the overture relayed by Kissinger.

Now the question is bound to be put to Kissinger again, when his confirmation hearing opens this Friday before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Physically, at least for one day, the Watergate preoccupation will be replaced in the Senate Caucus Room that day, with the marble-columned chamber borrowed for the Kissinger hearing.

In preparation for the hearing and for his new post, Kissinger in intervening days has been repeating in private meetings on Capitol Hill, and in quiet conversations with past elder statesmen of U.S. foreign policy, the theme of rebuilding "a new consensus" on America's role in the world.

Congress is bound to be looking beyond the President's highly articulate adviser, nevertheless, to the President for confirmation of the reassurances that the time for national reconciliation is now, "now that the Vietnamese war is behind us..."

President Nixon touched that theme glancingly yesterday, but only after he bristled over a question about his plan for "rebuilding confidence in your leadership." After four months of attack "by innuendo, by leak, by, frankly, leers and sneers of commentators," the President replied, confidence can be restored only "by doing something."

The action he envisions,

the President said, includes sending Kissinger on another trip to China, "after he is confirmed by the Senate, which I hope will be soon..."

This is the long-projected Kissinger visit to Peking, initially expected to follow the President's summit meeting in June with Soviet leader Leonid I. Brezhnev.

There has been speculation that the Kissinger trip would be a prelude to a first visit to the United States by Chinese Premier Chou En-lai. That speculation was reduced in July when Chou said he could not visit Washington as long as the "Chiang Kai-shek clique" had an ambassador here.

There continues to be a possibility, however, informed sources believe, that Chou, nevertheless, could still visit the United Nations, and the White House reportedly continues to keep fluid President Nixon's schedule of visits abroad to accommodate a meeting with the Chinese premier.

President Nixon also held high yesterday the prospects for producing a new nuclear strategic weapons accord in

his next summit meeting with Soviet leaders, sometime in 1974. Mr. Nixon specifically held out the hope for producing, at that meeting, an agreement on "limiting nuclear arms, including MIRVs," multiple, independently targeted, re-entry vehicles—the hydra-headed nuclear warheads.

Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger last month announced with a tone of chagrin that the Soviet Union had successfully flight-tested MIRV-style multiple warheads. While the accomplishment was antici-

pated, Schlesinger said, it nevertheless "deteriorated sadly" the chances for negotiating controls over these weapons.

President Nixon, however, expressed a more optimistic outlook on the MIRV obstacle yesterday. He noted that the Soviets "have a right ... under the present SALT agreement" to proceed with "modernization" of their weapons systems, as the United States does, and that the United States looks forward to achieving a new agreement that will include them.